

Hills, and north to Ojai and Santa Barbara. Vestiges of many of Payne's original plantings still remain.

In his lifetime, Theodore Payne clearly demonstrated his commitment to "... promote, preserve and restore California native landscapes and habitats," as well as in a lifetime beyond with the establishment in 1960, of the Theodore Payne Foundation for Wildflowers and Native Plants. The publication of *Theodore Payne in His Own Words, a Voice for California Native Plants*, rightfully reminds and acknowledges such a deep and worthy dedication.

—MELANIE BAER-KEELEY, Restoration Horticulturist, Sequoia Kings Canyon National Parks, Three Rivers, CA 93271

---

*California desert flowers: an introduction to families, genera, and species.* By SIA MORHARDT and EMIL MORHARDT. 2004. University of California Press, Berkeley, CA. 284 pp. Hardcover \$65.00, Paperback \$29.95. ISBN 0-520-24003-0.

This wonderful book provides a great introduction to the desert flora of California for beginning botanists, and will be a useful tool for exposing nontraditional students to scientific classification and taxonomic keys. More experienced students of California's flora will also value this book as a complement to more technical works (Munz 1974; Hickman 1993). The layout and content are well chosen, and will interest a wide readership.

As the book is very photograph-driven, the coverage is primarily of the showiest species from twenty-four families found in the Mojavean and Sonoran regions. These photographs are outstanding, even breathtaking in places. Although the stated purpose of introducing California's desert flora is performed very well, these photographs clearly reveal the book's metafunction: an emotive tribute to the authors' very deep respect of our state's tremendous beauty. This duality makes for a very engrossing read: close shots of choice blossoms seduce the reader as they admirably illustrate diagnostic features. Other photographs carefully capture the unique landscapes of the region with genuine sensitivity—the images of long views across dry bolsons (e.g., *Eucnide urens*, p. 188), scorched silver playas (*Lupinus magnificus*, p. 146), and cloud-shaded paintbrushed plains (*Escholtzia californica*, p. 220) will resonate deeply with many readers.

The photographs are complemented by useful diagrammatic icons and illustrations which demonstrate diagnostic features. All of these appeared accurate as of my first read, with the (minor) exception of a palmately lobed leaf labeled as a palmately

compound leaf (p. 9). Additionally, well-written taxonomic keys lead the reader to the taxa treated in the book, either genera or species.

Some subtle editorial content provides levity, but shows a measure of internal dissonance: Broccoli is mentioned as "the vegetable that George Bush I refused to eat (p. 107)," whereas later, the authors echo similar distaste for okra (p. 202). Elsewhere, use of the phrase "more favorable circumstances (p. 1)" to describe non-desert regions continues the traditional depiction of deserts as somehow impoverished, inferior or more hostile relative to non-desert regions (cf. 'cismontane' and 'transmontane' California, two geographically biased terms); although this may be true for many species (including some humans), 'favorable' and 'unfavorable' are relative terms, dependent on each individual. As this is a book of desert-adapted flora, many of the plants depicted here are growing under the most favorable conditions possible. The authors are entitled to these opinions, however.

The book deserves praise for presenting very accurate diagnostic information in an accessible format, and for also presenting much other interesting and useful content, including ethnobotany, nomenclature, and ecology. One novel portion concerns the etymology of *Opuntia*, which the authors suggest may have come from the Tohono O'odham word for prickly pear fruits ("opun," p. 116); other authors maintain this taxon (adopted by Tournefort by 1700, authored by Linnaeus in 1753, but most often used *sensu* Miller, 1754) is traced from ancient works of Theophrastus and Pliny the Elder, both of whom mention a plant growing near Opus (Greece), called opuntia, which can 'sprout roots from the leaves' (Crook and Mottram 1995).

I have seen this book used by non-botanists to identify wildflowers to genus, and their opinion was very favorable. The Morhardts have produced a welcome addition for anyone interested in natural history of California, and one especially important for beginning botanists; professional botanists will welcome it as well.

—M. PATRICK GRIFFITH, Department of Botany, Claremont Graduate University; Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, 1500 N. College Avenue, Claremont, California. michael.patrick.griffith@cgu.edu

#### LITERATURE CITED

- CROOK, R. AND R. MOTTRAM. 1995. *Opuntia* index. part 1: introduction and A-B. *Bradleya* 13:89–118.
- HICKMAN, J. C. (ED.). 1993. *The Jepson manual, higher plants of California*. University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA.
- MUNZ, P. A. 1974. *A flora of southern California*. University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA.